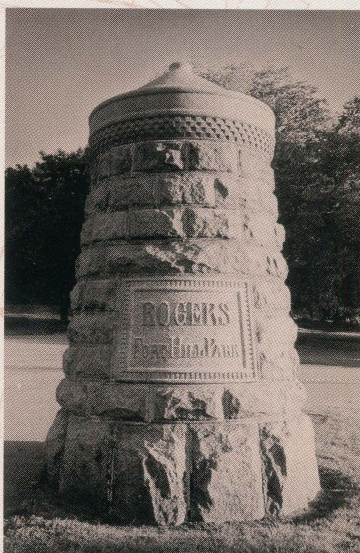


Rogers Fort Hill Park Historic District

Lowell's National Register
Neighborhoods



LOWELL HISTORIC BOARD

Located in the Belvidere neighborhood, the Rogers Fort Hill Park Historic District represents the suburbanization of Lowell in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The homes in the District include many in the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles as well as scattered examples of other period styles such as Stick, Shingle, and Tudor Revival. The centerpiece of the District is Rogers Fort Hill Park, the city's pre-eminent and largest picturesquely designed park.



Right:
Rogers
Street,
1924
UMass
Lowell



Early Development

The Rogers Fort Hill Park Historic District is typical of new neighborhoods being developed in Lowell in the late 19th century for the city's growing middle class of successful executives, entrepreneurs, and professionals. Development of these neighborhoods after the 1860s was influenced by street railways that made outlying areas easily accessible.

The name Fort Hill is derived from the establishment of a fort and palisade atop the large hill in 1669 by Wannalancit, last sachem of the Pennacook Confederacy, to protect his people from possible Mohawk attack. Originally part of Tewksbury, the area included the 247 acre farm of Zadock Rogers, one of three large farms occupying the area by 1805 and by 1834, the area was annexed to Lowell from Tewksbury.

Left:
Park
Avenue
East,
1928
UMass
Lowell

By 1870, Emily and Elizabeth Rogers were the sole survivors of the Rogers family. Under pressure from real estate developers and unable to continue managing the farm, the sisters negotiated with a syndicate formed by four local residents, Freeman B. Shedd, E.W. Hoyt, T.R. Garity, and E.A. Smith to purchase the entire Rogers Farm for development in 1883. A large area was set aside and developed by the syndicate for a park that was then donated to the City by Elizabeth Rogers in 1886. The earliest occupied homes in the District date from 1886 and 1887 but it was not until later in the 20th century that the entire area was built upon.

Architectural Development

The homes in the District include many Victorian styles including Queen Anne and Colonial Revival as well as scattered examples of other period styles such as Stick, Shingle, and Tudor Revival. The term "Victorian" embraces several different styles of architecture found in the District.

Right:
Zadock
Rogers
House,
ca. 1908
Pollard
Memorial
Library



The earliest home in the District pre-dates the subdivision of Rogers Farm. The Zadock Rogers House (196 Rogers Street; 1837-38) is a large Greek Revival structure with a full height portico created by six massive Ionic

columns and includes a center entrance with elliptical fanlight and sidelights. The house was enlarged extensively after 1892 for use as the Rogers Hall School, a private girls preparatory school, with the addition of two carefully designed additions to the east and west of the original Rogers house.

Upon subdivision of the Rogers Farm, the first homes to be built were mainly Queen Anne in style. Queen Anne homes are highly decorative, often combining varied materials, colors, and textures. Among the first to be constructed was the Mary Benner House (394 High Street; 1887) with its turned columns, decorative brackets at the porch and second-story angled corner bays, and sunburst

Right:
394
High
Street
panel and in the peaks of the pediment and bargeboards. Many Queen Anne homes on Fort Hill Avenue, High, and Huntington Streets were built in the 1880s.



Right:
31
Waverly
Avenue



Grand examples of the Queen Anne style are characterized by larger massing which increases their presence within the streetscape. Examples include 103 Sherman Street

(1891), the N.W. Norcross House (119 Sherman Street; 1890), the Clarence Whidden House (51 Huntington Street; 1887), the P.F. Sullivan House (31 Waverly Avenue; 1898), and the Harry Stanley House (22 Hoyt Avenue; 1899).

Several examples of Shingle style homes can be found in the District including the F.A. Butterick House (4 Hanks Street; 1893), the Henry Barnes House (30 Huntington Street; 1890), and the Charles Coburn House (109 Sherman Street; 1888).

Right:
116
Hanks
Street



Other period styles which are sparingly represented include the Medieval Revival, Tudor Revival, and Arts and Crafts. The Harry Dunlap House (116 Hanks

Street; 1898) is the District's only Tudor Revival design. The large, imposing design features a steep roof, shingle cladding, and a wide entry porch. The design is dominated by a broad gable in the south bay which features a half-timber and stucco design.

Houses built in the Colonial Revival style imitate, and often exaggerate, Colonial architectural details. The Robert Marden House's (40 Huntington Street; 1926) Colonial Revival design includes a projecting center bay,



deep modillioned cornice, and a one-story open porch supported by Doric columns and capped by a wide entablature. Many other Colonial Revival homes can be found in the

District including the Charles Hobson House (26 Hanks Street; 1895), the Charles Shepard House (100 Hanks Street; 1910), and the A.A. Cunningham House (124 Hanks Street; 1898).

Several buildings in the District were designed by prominent Lowell and Boston architect Frederick Stickney including the Queen Anne style Moody School (1891), the Elizabeth Rogers House (206 Rogers Street; 1892), and the Georgian Revival Rogers Hall School Gymnasium (1912). Stickney's other commissions in Lowell include the Butler School (1882), Pollard Memorial Library (1893), and Lowell High School (1893) among others. His works within the District are representative of the range of his talents, both in residential and institutional design.

The Shingle Style

Several homes in the Rogers Fort Hill Park area are built in the Shingle style. These homes often combine Queen Anne and Colonial Revival features with the distinguishing element being the wooden shingle. Shingles often cut in ornamental patterns cover the exterior surface of these buildings which are asymmetrically massed like the Queen Anne. Towers, recessed windows, and porches covered with shingles are common features. Because the shingles are always carried around towers or porches and there are no corner boards interrupting the surface, the shingles appear to form a skin which pulls together all of a building's features. Most Shingle houses in the country were built between 1880 and 1900.

The F.A. Butterick House (4 Hanks Street; 1893) exemplifies the Shingle style with its broad three-story gable across the full façade, two-story turret integrated into the south elevation's gable, and rolled shingle setbacks of the third story window. The many planes, recesses, and overhangs are also characteristic of the style.

The Henry Barnes House's (30 Huntington Street; 1890) three story gable has patterned shingle designs and extends over a side entrance porch. Deep modillioned overhangs at the second story, Ionic porch column, and Classically-inspired pediment at the third story window reflect the influence of the Colonial Revival.



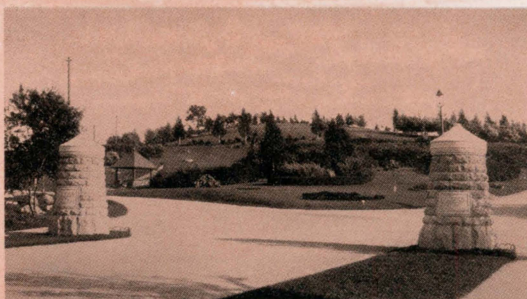
Rogers Fort Hill Park

Rogers Fort Hill Park is Lowell's largest picturesquely landscaped park. Land for the park was once part of the 247 acre Rogers Farm and was donated to the City by Elizabeth Rogers. Ernest Bowditch of Boston was commissioned to design the park. Bowditch was also responsible for designs for the Cleveland park system, the grounds of the Cornelius Vanderbilt Estate in Newport, and Shedd Playground in Lowell.

In 1886, the upper portion of the park was completed and two 13 foot tall granite columns marked its entrance. The park's design included winding footpaths and two carriage drives to the summit. The natural feeling of the plantings, the rocky outcrops, and rough terrain were popular elements of the picturesque style.

Construction in the "lower park" took place from 1904 until 1911 according to plans developed by the Olmsted firm, the country's foremost landscape architects. The design consisted of a series of formal paths, fountains, and gardens and contrasted with the rugged design of the pre-existing upper park.

A City nursery was begun on the north side of the hill in 1913. In 1921 a small zoo and deer park were established along the park's southwestern edge. Beginning in 1923, winter carnivals were held in the park each winter.



Who's Who at Rogers Fort Hill Park

Early residents of the Rogers Fort Hill Park area reflected the growth of Lowell's middle class in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among the original residents of the District were many successful families with ties to local business and industry. These included Abbott Lawrence, an optician, who lived at 111 Fort Hill Avenue. At 116 Hanks Street resided Harry Dunlap, a partner in A.G. Pollard Company, one of Lowell's largest department stores. Charles Shepard, owner of the Middlesex Machine Company, lived next door at 100 Hanks Street. Alexis Sargeant, a perfumer for E.W. Hoyt and Company, resided at 29 Hanks Street.

Right:
Huntington
Street,
1922
UMass
Lowell



Other early residents included F.A. Buttrick, at 4 Hanks Street, who was president of the City Institution for Savings. Next door lived Charles Hobson who was superintendent of the H.R. Barker Manufacturing Company, which

made steam and gas fittings. John Drury, at 44 Hanks Street, ran a successful plumbing supply outfit.

In later phases of the neighborhood's development, from 1916 through 1936, a greater degree of diversity was seen among its residents. Many homes were built by Irish and Greek Americans, as seen in the names of the owners: Donohue, Haggerty, Sullivan, Colopolis, etc. In some cases, one person acquired several adjacent lots and built a row of similar homes for speculation. Owners of lots often had a say in the design of their homes while in as many cases, the houses were erected by the development syndicate and then subsequently sold.

Left:
Rogers Fort
Hill Park,
ca. 1908
Pollard
Memorial
Library

The National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's resources worthy of preservation for their architectural, historical, or cultural value. The National Register was established in 1966 as a list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture. Buildings that have contributed to the development of the Nation and the Commonwealth, which are over fifty years old and not altered significantly, may be eligible.

Listing on the National Register does not place restrictions or limitations on the use, alteration, or disposition of private property. Listing does provide some protection from adverse action due to Federal or State funding, permitting, or licensing. Additionally, certain property owners who rehabilitate income-producing certified historic properties may be eligible for federal tax credits.

The Lowell Historic Board

Established by state statute in 1983, the Lowell Historic Board serves to preserve and protect the historic and architectural resources of the Downtown Lowell Historic District while encouraging economic development and tourism in the District's historic setting. As the City of Lowell's historic preservation agency, the Board also maintains the city's inventory of historic structures and sites. The Board also provides technical assistance and information on preservation to property owners citywide in addition to publishing educational and outreach materials and sponsoring several workshops and events throughout the year.

Resources

For additional information about the Rogers Fort Hill Park Historic District, other National Register or historic sites in Lowell, and historic preservation, contact:

Lowell Historic Board

J.F.K. Civic Center
50 Arcand Drive
Lowell, MA 01852
(978) 970-4270
www.historiclowell.net

For additional information about the National Register, contact:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125
(617) 727-8470
www.state.ma.us/sec/mhc

National Register of Historic Places

National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW
Room NC 400
Washington, D.C. 20240
(202) 343-9536
www.cr.nps.gov/nr

For information on architectural styles, preservation, and restoration, try:

A Field Guide to American Houses

Virginia and Lee McAlester
New York: Alfred A. Knopf
(1985)

The Old House Journal Guide to Restoration

Patricia Poore, editor
Old House Journal Corporation
(1992)

For additional information on Lowell architecture, try:

Lowell Then and Now: Restoring the Legacy of a Mill City

Charles Parrott with
Gretchen Sanders Joy
Lowell Historic Preservation Commission (1995)

Mill and Mansion: A Study of Architecture and Society in Lowell, Massachusetts 1820-1865

John Coolidge
New York: Columbia University Press (1942)

As you explore the Rogers Fort Hill Park Historic District, please respect the rights of property owners by not trespassing and remaining on public property as you view the many historic resources of the District.

This brochure is based upon the National Register of Historic Places registration form for the Rogers Fort Hill Park Historic District (Margo B. Webber with Betsy Friedberg, 1999) on file at the Lowell Historic Board, the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and the National Register of Historic Places, Washington, D.C.

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